

MINUTES OF JUNE 3rd, 1921.

The Board of Public Works met at the office of the Board of Public Works in Baltimore, Union Trust Building, on Friday, June 3rd, at 1 o'clock, p. m.

Present:

Albert C. Ritchie, Governor,  
John M. Dennis, Treasurer.

The Governor submitted the following letter to the Board:

STATE BOARD OF PRISON CONTROL,  
Baltimore, Md.

May 27th, 1921.

To His Excellency,  
Albert C. Ritchie,  
Governor of Maryland,  
Hon. John M. Dennis,  
Hon. E. Brooke Lee,  
Constituting the Board of  
Public Works of Maryland.

Gentlemen;

The State Board of Prison Control is reluctantly obliged once more to ask permission of the Board of Public Works to borrow money for maintenance of the Penitentiary and House of Correction, under the provisions of the Act of 1916 Chapter 556.

There are three contributing causes, the first and most important of which is the break down in our contract system during the late fall and early winter months. In obedience to the legislative mandate, the Board so drew all contracts that they could be terminated by either party at sixty days' notice. When the business depression of 1920 came, the largest firm in the Penitentiary, employing about 225 prisoners, terminated their contract, and another contractor, employing over 100 men, also gave us notice. A third firm laid off all excess men, and we were obliged to reduce the price of their labor in order to keep them at the institution. Owing to these conditions, at one period we had more than 400 idle men at the institution, and while now all are employed, it took us some time to get new contracts, and in all cases we had to start these at a reduced rate. The situation at the Penitentiary, therefore, is that our estimated earnings for the year ending September 30th, 1921 will be about \$208,000.00, as compared with \$285,000.00 in 1920 and \$239,000.00 in 1919.

The same situation existed at the House of Correction, where the largest contractor, employing about 125 men, terminated his contract. We were able to fill his place after a lapse of time but with a loss of earnings. The House of Correction has, in recent years, been realizing considerable profit from outside labor on State roads and on railroads. The State roads contracts are just beginning to be given out, and we have had no men employed on the railroad because of the quantity of free labor available. In addition, we have just been given notice that another contractor, employing about 125 men at the House of Correction, is going out of business, and this will entail another loss because it takes some time to fill the vacancy. The result is that the estimated earnings at the House of Correction for the present year are \$125,000.00 as against \$139,000.00 in 1920 and \$145,000.00 in 1919.

We would not have had these difficulties had we not been in

a period of transition, because our contracts would have been long-term contracts which could not have been terminated at short notice. We cannot start any industries of our own until the Legislature makes appropriations therefor, and, in the meanwhile, we are compelled to earn our living by the labor of the prisoners.

2. It costs between \$450,000.00 and \$500,000.00 to run the two institutions, and the State appropriates only \$50,000.00 out of the treasury, leaving the balance to be earned on contract. The appropriations for 1919 and 1920 from the treasury amounted to \$95,000.00, so that we have \$45,000.00 less for the current year and for next year.

3. It was found necessary at the beginning of the present year to increase the salaries of the employees in order to keep and procure men of the proper caliber, and to keep the pace, in some measure at least, with the high cost of living. These increases, which were approved by the Governor, amounted to about \$29,000.00. The cost of our coal and the freight rate thereon was about \$25,000.00 more than was estimated, although about half of this will be taken care of by farm products at the House of Correction which we can use to cut down our food allowance. The investigation last year at the Penitentiary disclosed the need of some additional kitchen and dining room appliances and some safety gates, and, in order to keep the women working, we purchased from an outgoing contractor some machinery which we are selling on time to a firm in the institution. These emergency expenses add about \$20,000.00.

In addition to the decrease in earnings and the increase in expenses, we have a very considerable increase in population at the House of Correction over that estimated. The population on September 30th, 1919 was 399, and on September 30th, 1920, it was 350, while during the entire winter and spring it has been between 600 and 700, and it shows little prospect of decrease. Most of these men are short-term men, and cannot be used profitably in any form of labor which requires instructions, and they are, from a financial standpoint, a dead-loss.

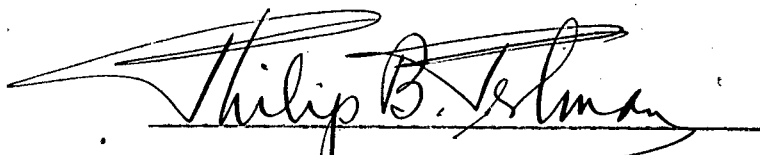
Under these circumstances we expect to be obliged to borrow from \$50,000.00 to \$75,000.00 to carry on the two institutions until September 30th, such loans to be repaid out of earnings when made, and we respectfully request your approval of such loans as required by law.

STATE BOARD OF PRISON CONTROL,  
By Ogle Marbury, Chairman.

- The Board adopted the following Resolution:

RESOLVED that the consent of the Board of Public Works be and it is hereby given, in accordance with the provisions of Section 629 of Article 27 of the Annotated Code, Chapter 556 of the Acts of 1916, to the State Board of Prison Control to borrow Seventy-five Thousand (\$75,000.00) Dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, for the maintenance of the Maryland Penitentiary and the Maryland House of Correction during the fiscal year ending September 30th, 1921.

There being no further business, the Board adjourned.

  
Secretary to the Board.